

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 569 Landfills

SPONSOR(S): Poppell

TIED BILLS: IDEN./SIM. BILLS: SB 1052

	REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1)	Agriculture & Natural Resources Policy Committee		Cunningham	Reese
2)	Military & Local Affairs Policy Committee			
3)	General Government Policy Council			
4)				
5)				

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Current law¹ prohibits the deposit of yard trash in lined landfills classified by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection rule as Class I landfills. The bill allows Class I landfills that are designed to utilize an active gas collection system, and that provide or arrange for reuse of the landfill gas collected at such facilities, to accept yard trash.

The bill has an effective date of July 1, 2010.

The bill appears to have no fiscal impact on state government; however, local governments and the private sector may be affected. See Section II of this analysis for further fiscal information.

¹ section 403.708, Florida Statutes,

HOUSE PRINCIPLES

Members are encouraged to evaluate proposed legislation in light of the following guiding principles of the House of Representatives

- Balance the state budget.
- Create a legal and regulatory environment that fosters economic growth and job creation.
- Lower the tax burden on families and businesses.
- Reverse or restrain the growth of government.
- Promote public safety.
- Promote educational accountability, excellence, and choice.
- Foster respect for the family and for innocent human life.
- Protect Florida's natural beauty.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Current Situation

According to chapter 62-701.340, Florida Administrative Code, landfills or solid waste disposal units are classified into one of three categories by the amount or types of wastes received.

- Class I landfills are those that receive an average of 20 tons or more of Class I waste² per day. There are 53 Class I landfills in Florida.
- Class II landfills (which are no longer being permitted in Florida because most facilities opt to be permitted as a Class I landfill) are those that receive an average of less than 20 tons of Class I waste per day.
- Class III landfills are those that receive only Class III waste³. Class III landfills cannot accept putrescible (likely to become putrid⁴) household waste. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) shall exempt Class III landfills from some or all of the requirements for liners, leachate controls, and water quality monitoring if the applicant demonstrates that no significant threat to the environment will result from the exemption based upon the types of waste received, methods for controlling types of waste disposed of, and the results of hydrogeological and geotechnical investigations.

Currently, section 403.708, F.S., prohibits the deposit of yard trash⁵ in lined landfills classified by DEP rule as Class I landfills. Yard trash that is source separated from solid waste may be accepted at a solid waste disposal area where separate yard trash composting facilities are provided and maintained. According to DEP, many local governments have expended significant money on implementing separate collection programs for yard trash. Due to the rising cost of purchasing additional land for landfill purposes, depositing yard trash in landfills has been discouraged. There are businesses that turn yard trash into mulch and other products and cities and municipalities are encouraged to recycle yard trash. Section 403.706, F.S., requires each county to implement a plan to achieve a goal of

² Class I waste means solid waste that is not hazardous waste, and that is not prohibited from disposal in a lined landfill. (rule 62-701.200, F.A.C.)

³ Class III waste means yard trash, construction and demolition debris, processed tires, asbestos, carpet, cardboard, paper, glass, plastic, furniture other than appliances, or other materials approved by DEP that are not expected to produce leachate that poses a threat to public health or the environment.

⁴ www.thefreedictionary.com

⁵ Yard trash is defined in rule 62-701.200, F.A.C., as vegetative matter resulting from landscaping maintenance or land clearing operations and includes materials such as tree and shrub trimmings, grass clippings, palm fronds, trees and tree stumps.

composting no less than 5% and up to 10% of organic materials that would otherwise be disposed of in a landfill.

The Energy, Climate Change and Economic Security Act of 2008 established a new statewide recycling goal of 75% by 2020. The Act directed the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to submit to the Florida Legislature a comprehensive program to achieve this goal. On January 4, 2010, the DEP submitted the required report to the Legislature.

The information and recommendations in the report were developed based on extensive research and the contributions of stakeholders who participated in four public workshops. An even wider range of ideas were submitted through DEP's Web forum and e-mails.

According to the report, Florida generates more than 32 million tons of municipal solid waste annually, almost two tons per resident per year. Today, more than two decades after the Legislature passed Florida's first 30% recycling goal, Floridians collectively recycle only 28% of their solid waste. The report explores ways to change that fact through heightened public awareness, state leadership, development and expansion of recycling markets, and more investments throughout the local government and commercial sectors.⁶

Effect of Proposed Changes

This bill allows Class I landfills, that have an active gas collection system and provide or arrange for reuse of the landfill gas, to accept yard trash. Counties and municipalities that implement separate collection programs may save money; however, this may inadvertently impact the availability of jobs.

According to DEP, 44 landfills have active gas collection systems. There are currently about 12 active landfills with active gas collection systems that beneficially use the gas. Those landfills would be affected by this bill. This bill would allow those landfills to accept yard trash for disposal. There are also about 32 landfills that actively collect landfill gas but do not beneficially use the gas. Some of those landfills could install a system to beneficially use the gas, and those landfills would then also be allowed to accept yard trash.

The elimination of the lined landfill yard trash ban could impact several different fronts. Combined collection with household waste might, in some cases, result in more efficient collection and possibly fewer waste-hauling trucks on the road. This, in turn, may result in a cost savings. Decreased vehicle traffic would positively impact energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. On the other hand, when yard trash is disposed of in a landfill, it decomposes under anaerobic conditions and generates methane, a greenhouse gas that has a global warming potential 21 times greater than carbon dioxide. If this methane is captured very efficiently and utilized to produce energy, it may result in energy savings and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. If the methane produced by the yard trash is not captured very efficiently, total greenhouse gas emissions would be expected to increase. It is not yet clear whether the active gas collection systems currently in place will operate efficiently enough to result in an overall decrease in greenhouse gas emissions.

Combining collection of household waste and yard trash would have a major impact on the waste management industry, and may impact local governments, landfill operators, haulers, yard trash facilities, biomass facilities, and compost/top soil producers. A study is currently underway as part of a DEP-funded research effort under contract with the University of Florida to evaluate the overall impacts of allowing yard trash disposal in some lined landfills. Allowing these landfills to accept yard trash will, most likely, increase the amount of landfill gas generated, resulting in greater efficiency and more alternative fuel produced. However, the amount of yard trash that is available for mulch or compost would be reduced. Allowing yard trash to be disposed of in Class I landfills may also impede the local government's composting requirement provided for in s. 403.706, F.S.

⁶ http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/quick_topics/publications/shw/recycling/75percent/75_recycling_report.pdf

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Amends s. 403.708, F.S., to allow the disposal of yard trash in Class I landfills that are designed to utilize an active gas collection system to collect landfill gas generated at the Class I facility and that provide or arrange for reuse of the landfill gas collected may accept yard trash for disposal.

Section 2. Gives an effective date of July 1, 2010.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None

2. Expenditures:

None

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

See fiscal comments section below.

2. Expenditures:

See fiscal comments section below.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

Privately owned landfills may benefit from the allowance of yard trash in landfills that collect the gas and reuse it or sell it. Businesses that operate yard trash processing facilities may see a reduction in the availability of yard trash. Businesses that operate Class III landfills or construction and demolition disposal facilities could see a decrease in tipping fees if yard trash is diverted to Class I landfills. Businesses that operate a Class I landfill and elect to install a system to collect landfill gas and reuse it would incur start-up costs of the system and its installation.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

Non-recurring Effects: If a local government is operating a Class I landfill and elects to put in a system to beneficially use landfill gas, there would be start-up costs of installing such a system. Otherwise, none.

Recurring Effects: Many local governments have expended significant money on implementing separate collection programs for yard trash. In some cases the local government might save money if it could do away with separate collection and just take all the yard trash to the Class I landfill. In other cases the local government might find it more difficult or expensive to collect enough yard trash to continue supplying a mulching, or fuel-making operation.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable because this bill does not appear to require the counties or cities to spend funds or take an action requiring the expenditure of funds; reduce the authority that cities or counties have to

raise revenues in the aggregate; or reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with cities or counties.

2. Other:

None

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None

IV. AMENDMENTS/COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES